

About Assemblymember Koretz

PAUL KORETZ: A LEADER FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY

Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) was elected to represent the 42nd Assembly District in November of 2000. Mr. Koretz began his political career when he worked to incorporate the City of West Hollywood in 1984 and served as Mayor and City Councilman for 12 years before his election to the California State Assembly. Paul Koretz has been a long time champion of core progressive issues such as strengthening labor, improving public health, reducing gun violence and vigorously fighting for human rights, particularly for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community. Mr. Koretz has also established himself as a leader in developing environmental protection and animal welfare legislation.

Always an advocate for the LGBT community, Paul Koretz strongly supports marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples. In 2001, he authored AB 1338 that would have brought Vermont-style Civil Unions to California. From that ground breaking effort came AB 205, the landmark legislation that will bring virtually all the rights and responsibilities of marriage under state law to domestic partners on January 1, 2005. As a joint author of AB 205, Koretz, joined with Jackie Goldberg and the rest of the LGBT Caucus to fight a difficult legislative battle that ultimately led to the bill's narrow passage in the Legislature.

Paul Koretz has been a legislative leader on HIV/AIDS issues both in local government and in the State Assembly. As a local official he advocated for the mandatory distribution of condoms in bars and restaurants and helped to create an extensive, state of the art program of social services for people with HIV and AIDS. In 1996, he was the first elected official to complete the California AIDS Ride from San Francisco to West Hollywood.

Working with the Southern California HIV Advocacy Coalition and the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Assemblyman Koretz won passage of AB 2197. When fully implemented, this law will improve access to high quality health care for persons with HIV by expanding Medi-Cal eligibility to include non-disabled HIV patients.

Koretz also introduced AB 879 to establish physician guidelines for HIV post-exposure prophylaxis in cases of sexual exposure. This treatment, also known as PEP, can actually prevent many HIV infections after sexual exposure if the four-week drug regime is started within 72 hours from exposure. AB 879 will ensure that doctors have the protocols necessary to effectively administer PEP treatment.

Assemblyman Koretz has become a national leader in the effort to ban the spermicide Nonoxonyl-9 from condoms and lubricants. Once thought to inhibit HIV infection, Nonoxonyl-9 has been shown to actually increase the risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. He first quietly negotiated with condom manufacturers. Now that the manufacturers have refused to remove this harmful chemical from their products, Mr. Koretz is working to bring national attention to the fact that the FDA and the condom manufacturers are failing in their primary responsibility to protect public health.

A life long Democrat, Paul Koretz lives in West Hollywood with his wife Gail, daughter Rachel and their two cats Chagall and Samantha. He loves baseball, science fiction, spending time with his family and enjoying LA's rich diverse cultural life.